United Nations E/1999/65

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
7 June 1999

Original: English

Substantive session of 1999
Geneva, 5–30 July 1999
Item 6 of the provisional agenda*
Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits

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Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report serves as a progress report on the implementation of Economic and Social Council resolution 1998/44 on the integrated and coordinated follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits, and as the annual report on the coordinated follow-up to conferences mandated by the Council in its resolution 1997/61.

Half way through the series of five-year reviews of the major United Nations conferences and summits of the 1990s, the report highlights further developments regarding the coordinated follow-up to conferences. It depicts a mixed picture regarding progress towards cross-cutting conference goals and identifies steps that the Council could take to stimulate progress, and more particularly to guide the preparation of the reviews of conferences. The report, however, also finds that the Council is increasingly successful in guiding and coordinating the work of its subsidiary machinery on the follow-up to conferences. A few steps are proposed to further enhance the Council's interaction with its functional commissions, funds and programmes and the specialized agencies. The report also makes proposals on improving the interaction among the various bodies on the follow-up to conferences. It also describes the growing partnership between ACC and the Council, particularly on the follow-up to conferences, and highlights how the Council could encourage that continuing work. In addition, it also finds that the United Nations system

* E/1999/100 and Add.1

99-16976 (E) 240699

is making important progress to integrate its efforts for the follow-up to conferences at the country level, in particular through thematic groups and the implementation of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework and the common country assessment. UNDAF and the common country assessment are also viewed as important tools to advance the system's collaboration on evaluation and monitoring. A number of recommendations are presented in the final section of the report for the review of the Council.

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I. Introduction

1. For a number of years but especially since the adoption of its 1995 agreed conclusions, the Economic and Social Council has promoted a coordinated and integrated approach within the United Nations system to implement the major conferences and summits of the 1990s, particularly concerning their main objective of achieving poverty eradication but also with respect to other common goals. In May 1998, the Council devoted a special session to the coordinated follow-up to conferences, and in its resolution 1998/44, gave guidance to the United Nations system for better integrating its efforts to implement conferences; the present report devotes particular attention to the implementation of that resolution.[1]

2. The report highlights developments related to cross-cutting conference goals (section II). It then describes progress in the management and coordination role of the Council (section III) and in inter-agency coordination (section IV). Coordinated follow-up to conferences at country level (section V) and some aspects related to the evaluation of activities for conference implementation (section VI) are subsequently addressed. A section devoted to recommendations concludes the report (section VII).

II. Developments related to cross-cutting conference themes

3. Thus far, the five-year reviews of major United Nations conferences and summits reveal a mixed picture, giving rise to doubts that the goals and targets set at conferences can be reached within their agreed time periods, globally and regionally and in many countries, unless the current rate of progress is accelerated (see A/53/186; E/CN.5/1999/4; E/CN.9/1999/PC/2; and A/53/372). Although considerable progress had been made in a number of areas, such as children's health, literacy, life expectancy and reproductive health programmes, which demonstrates that concerted efforts by Governments with international support can have concrete results, at the same time advances have been limited on several fronts, and there have been setbacks in a number of areas. Progress in the fight against poverty and unemployment has been eroded by the severe economic difficulties experienced in several countries as a result of the Asian financial crisis. Malnutrition, malaria, diarrhoeal and communicable diseases continue to kill millions and stifle the economic potential of large segments of the population. The human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) epidemic is leading to increased mortality in many countries, in particular in sub-Saharan Africa, where it is causing serious development problems.

4. Besides socio-economic impediments, conflicts, which have erupted or continued to linger in several parts of the world, have impoverished countries in a number of major regions, in many cases wiping out the achievements of decades of economic and social development and environmental protection, and compromising the possibility of reaching

[1] The report also responds to Council resolution 1997/61, in which the Council requested the Secretary-General, in cooperation with United Nations system organizations, to submit a report on progress achieved by the United Nations system at the intergovernmental, inter-agency and country levels, with specific recommendations on ways to enhance the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences system. The report should be read in conjunction with previous reports on the subject, which contain more elaborate information on coordinated conference follow-up (E/1998/19; E/1997/73; and E/1995/86). The possible modalities of a review by the Council of progress made within the United Nations system in promoting coordinated conference follow-up, as a possible contribution to the Millennium Assembly (see Council resolution 1998/44, para. 17), are addressed in a separate report (see E/1999/___).

the goals set by United Nations major conferences. Dealing with conflict is also affecting aid flows: the proportion of official development assistance (ODA) devoted to relief has increased from 2 per cent to over 10 per cent in the last decade. Operations in countries emerging from conflict now account for nearly a quarter of the International Development Association (IDA) and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) portfolios.

5. In addition, trends in resources for development have not been consistent with the commitments undertaken by Governments at conferences. The Council has repeatedly called for mobilizing new and additional resources from all sources for implementing conference outcomes. While recognizing the crucial importance of domestic resources, it has reaffirmed the commitment to fulfil as soon as possible the agreed United Nations target for official development assistance (most recently in its resolution 1998/44). Instead, ODA has declined continuously for the last five years to reach a record low of 0.22 per cent of the combined gross national product (GNP) of Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)/Development Assistance Committee (DAC) member countries in 1997. However, at least three industrialized countries have announced plans to increase the proportion of their GNP allocated to aid (Ireland, Germany, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland), in addition to the four countries that are already providing more than 0.7 per cent of their GNP (Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden).

6. Trends in terms of targeting aid on countries most in need and on conference goals are also a matter of great concern. According to OECD/DAC, the share of aid going to countries the furthest away from conference goals has declined slightly, even somewhat more than total aid, thereby making their achievement even harder. Particularly worrying is the weakening in the concentration of overall aid on countries with the poorest populations.[2]

7. Related to targeting is the 20/20 Initiative launched at the World Summit for Social Development, which suggested that interested developed and developing countries partners agree on mutual commitments to allocate, on average, 20 per cent of ODA and 20 per cent of the national budget, respectively, to basic social programmes. The Council, in its resolution 1998/44, stressed the need for further progress in implementing the 20/20 Initiative by interested countries. Currently, most developing countries and their developed partners spend less than 20 per cent of their budget and ODA, respectively, on basic social services. The Council might consider conducting a dialogue on the 20/20 Initiative at an appropriate time, involving OECD/DAC and other international organizations together with member States. Such a dialogue could assist in refining the initiative and mobilize support for it (see recommendation 2).

8. At the same time, there is growing agreement that efforts for relieving the debt burden of the poorest countries must be further strengthened, and that the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPCs) Initiative must be further improved and its implementation accelerated. In particular, the list of poor indebted countries eligible for debt relief needs to be extended, the length of the debt relief process shortened and the definition of sustainable levels of debt relaxed. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) Interim Committee, at its spring 1999 meeting, agreed to give new impetus to efforts to reduce the debt of low-income countries undertaking strong adjustment programmes. The World Bank and IMF have undertaken a worldwide consultation on the Initiative in order to make it a fully effective contribution to the overall resolution of the debt problems of the heavily indebted poor countries.

[2] See *Development Cooperation Report, 1998*.

III. Intergovernmental level: progress in the coordination and management role of the Council

9. Since 1995, the Council's efforts to better manage the work of its subsidiary machinery and enhance coordination within the United Nations system at large have had as a major objective the promotion of concerted follow-up to the world conferences of the 1990s. Considerable progress has been achieved, on which the Council can continue to build. However, the Council also needs to consider ways and means of contributing to the five-year reviews of conferences, including through ensuring that they complement and build upon one another. In addition, the Council needs to look beyond the five-year reviews and guide the system and its subsidiary machinery towards the 10-year reviews of conferences.

A. Five-year reviews and beyond

10. While the implementation of and follow-up to conferences takes place in the functional commissions of the Council, the five-year reviews of these conferences are conducted as special sessions of the General Assembly, with the functional commissions acting as preparatory committees of the whole. Consequently, the role of the Council in these five-year reviews requires clarification.

11. 1999 will see the five-year review of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) as well as the comprehensive review of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. Furthermore, preparations for the reviews of the World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women in 2000, of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) in 2001 and for the 10-year review of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in 2002 are under way.

12. There have been a number of difficulties in reaching agreement on the work leading up to some conference reviews. The Preparatory Committee for the special session of the General Assembly on the five-year review of ICPD indicated progress in implementing the ICPD Programme of Action but had to reconvene in May 1999 to approve key actions for the further implementation of the Programme of Action. The Commission on the Status of Women acting as the preparatory committee for the five-year review of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women has identified documentation for its next session but has not yet defined the approach and expected outcomes of the special session itself. The Preparatory Committee for the special session of the General Assembly to review the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development has decided on the title of the special session and has invited the Commission for Social Development, at its next session, to undertake the overall review of the implementation of the Summit's goals in preparation of the next deliberation of the Preparatory Committee. But it did not adopt draft texts on further actions and initiatives to implement the Summit's commitments. The Council could encourage continued progress in these processes (see recommendation 1).

13. Inevitably, the preparatory committees address cross-cutting conference themes such as resources for development, health and education. The Secretariat has an important role to play in assisting the Council to promote better complementarity and coordination in the

five-year reviews of conferences, and, indeed, it has done so, where appropriate, by integrated reporting.[3]

14. The policy guidance provided by the Council, particularly on cross-cutting themes, is an essential part of the effort to ensure that the five-year reviews are complementary and mutually supportive. This guidance needs to be used as much as possible in the upcoming five-year reviews in order to ensure a more coherent approach and to avoid duplication of efforts.[4] Thus, on poverty eradication, the outcomes of the Council's high-level segment (on the role of employment and work in poverty eradication: the empowerment and advancement of women) and of its operational activities segment (on poverty eradication and capacity-building) should be considered as inputs into the five-year reviews of the Beijing and Copenhagen conferences. The same holds for the Council's coordination segment on the implementation and coordinated follow-up by the United Nations system of initiatives on African development (see recommendation 3).

15. Coordination is all the more necessary because later conferences have brought advances and new approaches to some of the programmes of action. For instance, the Fourth World Conference on Women added a number of dimensions which need to be taken into account when identifying measures for the further implementation of, for example, the ICPD Programme of Action. It may be noted in this respect that the Preparatory Committee for the review of the Summit decided to take into account the results of other major United Nations conferences. Furthermore, the General Assembly, in its political declaration on the world drug problem, called upon the United Nations system and invited the international financial institutions to include action against the drug problem into their programmes, taking into account the priority of States (para. 8). The Executive Director of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP), inviting them to take action in this respect, drew this provision to the attention of all ACC members. Drug control should henceforth be regarded as a cross-cutting priority for the United Nations system. It may be recalled that Governments at the World Summit for Social Development agreed to address the problems of illicit drugs as a factor of social disintegration (see recommendation 6).

16. The Council could encourage further efforts to coordinate the preparation of the upcoming five-year reviews of conferences. It could invite the bureaux of the preparatory committees of the forthcoming five-year reviews of the Copenhagen and Beijing conferences to consult with one another to avoid duplication and ensure cross-fertilization of ideas between the two reviews (see recommendation 4).

17. The Council might also start to consider how it could best support and guide the preparation of the upcoming 10-year reviews of the World Summit for Children, UNCED and other conferences. Annex I highlights major upcoming events related to United Nations conference follow-up. It may be mentioned that, further to the comprehensive review of

[3] For instance, the Population Division of the United Nations Secretariat prepared a review of progress towards targets and goals set by the conferences and summits of the 1990s in the area of social needs (ESA/WP/149). This review was used for the five-year review of both the International Conference on Population and Development and the World Summit for Social Development. Similarly, the Preparatory Committee for the review of the Fourth World Conference on Women was presented with background information on other conference reviews, and will draw on the information gathered for the review of the World Summit.

[4] In the past, the Council has provided guidance on gender mainstreaming, poverty and the follow-up to the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action at its coordination segment, and on fostering an enabling environment for development and on market access at its high-level segment. It may be mentioned, in this respect, that the General Assembly welcomed the ministerial communiqué adopted by the Council, and decided to monitor its implementation in the context of its item on trade and development (see Assembly resolution 53/170).

the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action in 1998, to date no 10-year review has been planned for the World Conference on Human Rights[5] (see recommendation 5).

18. It should also be noted that an end-of-decade assessment of progress towards the goals of the World Conference on Education for All (EFA) is scheduled to take place at the fourth global meeting of the EFA Forum in 2000. To the extent possible, this process should be linked with the five-year reviews of education goals of other conferences (see recommendation 7). Besides the EFA review, it is also worth noting that a world conference on science will be convened under the auspices of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) from 26 June to 1 July 1999.

19. Civil society plays an important and multifaceted role in implementing conference goals, and its full mobilization is an important ingredient in progressing towards these goals. As called for by the Council, there has been considerable participation by non-governmental organizations in conference follow-up processes of the United Nations. For the five-year reviews, civil society involvement has taken place through, *inter alia*, direct participation of accredited NGOs in the various intergovernmental forums. Civil society forums have provided inputs into the five-year reviews of UNCED and ICPD, and are being encouraged for the five-year reviews of the World Summit for Social Development, the Fourth World Conference on Women and Habitat II.[6]

20. An important leverage for the future implementation of conferences lies in mobilizing the support of the private sector in promoting the core goals set at the conferences. The Economic and Social Council could consider ways and means of engaging the private sector's interest and cooperation in the follow-up to conferences. In this regard, the Council might wish to examine the experience of the multi-stakeholder dialogue held during the Commission on Sustainable Development, in 1999, where the major groups represented were business and industry, workers and trade unions, local authorities and non-governmental organizations. Such partnerships could also be considered for mobilizing support around key conference goals relating to children, women, education and health as well as in the area of HIV/AIDS, where cooperation between the United Nations system, Governments and the pharmaceutical industry is crucial (see recommendation 16).

B. Guidance and coordination by the Council of its subsidiary machinery

21. Since 1995, the Council has stressed that in order to better coordinate the follow-up to conferences, it should strengthen its role to guide and coordinate its subsidiary machinery. It has made considerable progress in this respect. In particular, the transmission and follow-

[5] The General Assembly will continue to address the implementation of the World Conference on Human Rights (under a specific agenda item at its fifty-fourth session). In 1999, the Council will review the implementation of its agreed conclusions on the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, which constituted a major input into the review of the Conference.

[6] There has been considerable expansion of the number of NGOs participating in functional commissions and other intergovernmental forums: the number of NGOs that participated in functional commissions in 1999 are as follows:

Commission on Human Rights: 210 NGOs registered, 800 individuals
Commission for Social Development: 113 NGOs (against 49 in 1996)
Commission for Sustainable Development: 900 NGOs
ICPD five-year review: 700 NGOs

up of the relevant outcomes of the Council has become more systematic.[7] The Council is also becoming a forum where a broad range of development actors comes together. Its increasingly close relationship with regional organizations, such as OECD/DAC, which recently gained observer status with the General Assembly, is particularly noteworthy.

1. Functional commissions

22. The relationship between the Council and its functional commissions has become much closer and increasingly substantive since 1995. As was the case in 1998, a consolidated report on the work of functional commissions in 1999 will be presented to the Council in 1999, which is intended to assist the Council, *inter alia*, in coordinating the work of commissions on conference follow-up (see E/1999/3 and Council resolution 1999/1).

23. Direct interaction with the bureaux of the functional commissions is also increasing, which contributes to a more integrated follow-up to conferences. In 1999, the Bureau of the Council met with the bureaux of all its functional commissions to discuss their work, including the follow-up to conferences and guidance by the Council.[8] Interaction among functional commissions has also continued to improve through the exchange of substantive inputs and the occasional participation of the chairpersons of one commission in the sessions of other commissions. Also, the Bureau of the Commission on Population and Development set a useful precedent by sharing the report of its inter-sessional meeting with the bureaux of other functional commissions.

24. Follow-up to the guidance by the Council on conferences follow-up and implementation, as well as other issues, appears to be most effective when a commission has a specific agenda item under which it discusses the follow-up to the Council's resolutions and decisions,[9] and when a commission is presented with a note by the Secretariat outlining the main aspects of the Council's guidance addressed to the Commission together with proposed follow-up actions.[10] The Council may wish to consider whether its commissions should use such practices more generally (see recommendation 8).

25. At the same time, for future substantive interaction between the Council and the commissions to function well, it is important that the respective roles of the Council and its commissions be clearly understood and built upon. Commissions, in their outcomes, should identify more clearly actions that require a coordinated United Nations system response because of the Council's role in coordination, and should highlight recommendations specifically addressed to United Nations organizations because of the Council's role in ensuring that the guidance by functional commissions is implemented by agencies, funds and programmes (see recommendation 9).

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[7] The President of the Council conveyed the outcomes of the substantive session of 1998 of the Council to the chairpersons of all functional commissions, the Presidents of the Executive Boards of UNICEF, UNDP/UNFPA and WFP, and the Presidents of the governing boards of all specialized agencies. Letters were also sent to the Chairman of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, as well as to the Presidents of regional development banks (with regard to a number of recommendations specifically addressed to regional development banks contained in the Council's agreed conclusions on the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action).

[8] The outcomes of these meetings are described in a separate report.

[9] The Commission on the Status of Women will have such an item at its next session; the Statistical Commission had such an item in 1999.

[10] This was done for the Commission the Status of Women and the Commission on Population and Development in 1997 in reply to the Council's agreed conclusions of 1996 on poverty eradication, as well as for the Statistical Commission in 1999.

26. The Council may wish to examine the guidance given by its commissions to United Nations system organizations. It could request the Secretariat to prepare an updated table reflecting the guidance by all commissions, and invite the President of the Council to bring to the attention of the chairmen of governing bodies of United Nations system organizations the guidance given by commissions for implementation (see recommendation 10).

27. In this regard, it should be noted that the Council, in its resolution 1998/44, agreed that the Council, on the basis of an integrated report by the Secretary-General, will consider annually the relevant outcomes of the functional commissions on conference follow-up, for transmission, as appropriate, to the funds, programmes and specialized agencies. The table contained in annex II is a first attempt to respond to this request, and highlights the guidance addressed by selected functional commissions to funds, programmes and agencies.[11]

28. The table contained in annex II focuses on recommendations explicitly addressed to United Nations system organizations, as contained in agreed conclusions, resolutions and decisions adopted by functional commissions. However, the implicit general policy and programme guidance formulated by the commissions also needs to be taken into account by the United Nations system organizations. This is especially necessary in view of the fact that commissions follow quite different practices in addressing recommendations to United Nations system organizations. Some address detailed recommendations to specific organizations, others adopt general policy guidance, while others address very few recommendations to the United Nations system.

2. Regional commissions

29. Regional commissions have continued to work actively on the follow-up to each conference and corresponding regional action plans (for detailed information, the Council's attention is drawn to the report of the Secretary-General on regional cooperation, in particular the subsection on the follow-up to global conferences (E/1999/__).[12]

30. Furthermore, in follow-up to Council resolution 1998/46, a series of coordination meetings have been held under the auspices of regional commissions to enhance the coordination of the activities of the United Nations system at the regional level. These meetings, which might be considered a form of regional ACC, were chaired by the Deputy Secretary-General. They proposed ways to improve the collective response by the United Nations system to the needs of the region and to improve existing regional coordination mechanisms.

31. There is also regular participation of the regional commissions in the work of the functional commissions. Nonetheless, efforts could be made to enhance the substantive input by regional commissions into the work of the functional commissions, and vice versa. Efforts to build such substantive linkages should be encouraged and reflected in the respective programme of work of the regional and the functional commissions (see recommendation 11).

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[11] Only the reports of the Commissions for Social Development, on the Status of Women, on Sustainable Development, and on Population and Development, and of the Statistical Commission were available at the time of preparation of the present report.

[12] The Council invited the regional commissions "to pursue conference follow-up on a systematic basis, within their respective mandates and priorities by, *inter alia*, enhancing their interaction with other parts of the United Nations system, in particular the functional commissions" (see Council resolution 1998/44).

3. Executive boards of funds and programmes

32. An improved substantive dialogue between the Council and the executive boards of the funds and programmes will help to integrate efforts to implement conferences. As noted earlier and as requested by the Council in its resolution 1998/44, the President of the Council wrote to the Chairmen of the Executive Boards of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Food Programme (WFP) to transmit the outcomes of the Council's work in 1998. The letter highlighted recommendations specifically addressed to the funds and programmes, including in relation to the coordinated follow-up to conferences. The reports of the executive heads of UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF to the Economic and Social Council highlight actions by these funds and programmes to implement the guidance of the Council. Each report devotes a specific section to the integrated and coordinated implementation and follow-up to conferences. To help the Council to provide informed and useful guidance to the executive boards, it is important that these reports by funds and programmes identify issues and questions arising from the follow-up to conferences in order to enable the Council to fulfil its coordination role. Some progress is being made in this respect (see box 1) (see recommendation 12).

Box 1

Highlights of the reports of UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF to the Council on coordinated conference follow-up[a]

All three reports devote a specific section to the integrated and coordinated implementation and follow-up to conferences.[b] UNDP reports that the establishment of thematic groups on such cross-cutting issues as poverty and gender, with the participation of government, civil society and the private sector, positively influenced the coordination of operational activities related to conference follow-up. UNICEF stresses that the first and second ACC guidance notes on the coordinated follow-up to conferences — now broadly circulated — will help to provide a more complete overview of results achieved and partnerships developed, as well as a more effective sharing of best practices. United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) provisional guidelines also help United Nations country teams to support Governments in the follow-up to conferences. The role of the reports of resident coordinators as a feedback and oversight tool to monitor progress on United Nations operational activities for coordinated conference follow-up is recognized, and UNDP invites the Council to support this growing role. UNICEF also monitors the success in conference follow-up through the annual reports of its country offices.

The reports of UNICEF and UNFPA also highlight a number of headquarters and regional-level activities to implement individual conferences, including ICPD, the World Summit for Social Development, Habitat II, UNCED, the World Conference on Human Rights, the Education for All conference, and the General Assembly special session on drug control. UNDP highlights that it has stressed the importance of integrated and coordinated conference implementation in its programme of work, as well as in its role as manager of the resident coordinator system. It has sought to promote poverty eradication and sustainable livelihoods

as an overarching goal, as detailed in its *Poverty Report 1998: Overcoming Human Poverty*. UNDP, however, underscores the relative lack of political support for "horizontal" conference follow-up, i.e., coordinated conference follow-up as opposed to conference-by-conference follow-up, and the lack of indicators to permit effective integrated and coordinated conference follow-up, whereas sectoral indicators for individual conferences are more abundant.

The role of the Council in addressing the problem of financing of multilateral organizations and raising political will is addressed. The report of UNDP invites the Council to call upon governing bodies of funds and programmes to devote specific resources to horizontal follow-up to conferences, in addition to the already mandated vertical follow-up.

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[a] DP/1999/10; E/ICEF/1999/4 (part I); DP/FPA/1999/5.
[b] The reports of UNICEF and UNDP also devote a specific section to gender issues.

33. Closer substantive interaction is also being pursued through interaction between the bureaux of the Council and of the boards. In 1999, the Bureau of the Council met for the first time with the Bureau of the Executive Boards of UNICEF and UNDP/UNFPA (see report on meetings with functional commissions). The meetings, *inter alia*, highlighted the need for closer interaction between the functional commissions and the boards of the funds and programmes, for which there is considerable scope for improvement. In addition to transmitting the outcomes of functional commissions to the boards as noted in the previous section, the Council could encourage the boards to invite chairpersons of functional commissions to present the most relevant outcomes of their commissions to the boards. It could also encourage joint bureaux meetings of the boards of funds and programmes and the functional commissions. In this respect, the fact that the Chairperson of the Commission for Social Development reported to the Board of UNDP/UNFPA on the work of the Commission is a particularly positive development (see recommendation 13).

4. Specialized agencies and their governing bodies

34. In view of the important role of specialized agencies in the follow-up to conferences, the Council has made efforts to deepen its interaction with the specialized agencies, and has encouraged their more active and high-level participation in its sessions. Therefore, at both its substantive session of 1998 and at its meeting in May 1999 on basic indicators for the follow-up to conferences, a number of executive heads and representatives of specialized agencies participated in panel discussions with the Council. Also, a growing number of reports presented to the Council have been prepared under the leadership of a specialized agency and/or through a collective effort involving the Secretariat and several organizations. These interactions should be complemented by a more active engagement of the intergovernmental governing bodies of the agencies concerned (see recommendations 14 and 15).

IV. Inter-agency coordination

35. Recent years have seen a considerable strengthening of inter-agency cooperation, across the board and in areas identified as priorities by conferences. A culture of working together is developing within the United Nations system both in countries and at headquarters. The country strategy note, UNDAF, the common country assessment and the proposed comprehensive development framework of the World Bank stress partnerships, collaborative action and joint programming in support of the development goals of global conferences. Overall, this growing collaboration has in no small part been driven by the Council's efforts to encourage inter-agency cooperation and increase the involvement of United Nations system organizations in its own work.

A. Growing partnership between ACC and the Council

36. There has been substantial progress in recent years to ensure more intensive and improved interaction between ACC and the Council and its functional and regional commissions (see Council resolution 1998/44). This is particularly visible on the follow-up to conferences: over the last two years, a good number of the cross-cutting themes emanating from conferences have been addressed by ACC. The Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development (IACSD) and the three ad hoc inter-agency task forces set up by ACC were among the major instruments available to the system and the Council in promoting a system-wide coordinated approach to conference follow-up at the headquarters and country levels.[13] The follow-up to the work of the task forces is being assumed by ACC and its machinery, as discussed below. The dialogue between the ACC machinery and the Council during the session on coordinated conference follow-up in May 1998 was a good example of the intrinsic and improved interaction between these two bodies. The May 1999 dialogue on basic indicators for conference follow-up between the Council and the relevant experts from within the system and others was another such example. On many cross-cutting conference issues, ACC adopted statements aimed at stimulating a coherent set of actions by the United Nations system and mobilizing its subsidiary machinery to support the Council. Thus, in October 1998 ACC gave guidance for enhanced United Nations system collaboration to pursue the recommendations made by the Secretary-General in his report on Africa — which may assist the Council at its coordination segment in 1999.[14] In other instances, ACC has regularly submitted statements to the relevant functional commissions on conference follow-up. ACC also regularly discusses the activities of the various organizations on the follow-up to all conferences.

37. Furthermore, as requested by the Council, regular briefings have been held for the Council on the work of ACC.[15] Besides, efforts are also being made to ensure a wide dissemination of the outcomes of ACC, as called for by the Council. Another manifestation

[13] It will be recalled that ACC created three task forces, on an enabling environment for development, led by the World Bank; on full employment and sustainable livelihoods, led by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and on basic social services for all, led by UNFPA (see E/1998/19).

[14] The annual overview report of ACC for 1998 describes the work of ACC in 1998 (see E/1998/48).

[15] In the follow-up to Council decision 1997/311 and Council resolution 1998/44, para. 9, the Secretary-General brief the Council on the work of ACC on 3 February 1999, and subsequently on 25 March 1999 held a dialogue with the Council on the work of ACC and the Council. During the organizational session of the Council in May 1999, the Assistant-Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs briefed the Council on the outcomes of the spring session of ACC, together with representatives of the World Bank and UNICEF

of this growing partnership is the increasing interaction between the ACC standing machinery and the functional commissions of the Council. Indeed, a close and symbiotic relationship has developed between the functional commissions of the Council and the relevant ACC standing committees: between the Commission on Sustainable Development and IACSD, the Commission on the Status of Women and the Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality (IACWGE), and the Commission on Population and Development and the ACC Subcommittee on Demographic Estimates and Projections. These and other relationships are described in greater detail in the annual overview report of ACC for 1998 (E/1999/48).

38. The outcomes of ACC, in particular on the follow-up to conferences, should not only support policy coordination by Council and United Nations bodies but also serve to promote mutually supporting decisions by governing bodies of the organizations of the system. In this respect, ACC encouraged its members to engage their governing bodies on issues of system-wide concern and to bring the ACC perspective to these governing bodies.[16] These efforts of ACC could be supported by the Council's own efforts to reach out to governing bodies of other organizations.

B. Collaborative effort of ACC machinery to integrate and coordinate the efforts of the United Nations system to implement conference outcomes

39. The follow-up to the three ad hoc task forces established by ACC from 1995 through 1998 on the coordinated follow-up to conferences is ongoing in the United Nations system. The outputs of the task forces, in particular the guidelines, have been widely distributed to organizations, field representatives and the resident coordinator system, as was the first ACC guidance note on the coordinated follow-up to conferences. Furthermore, the ACC statement on commitment for action to eradicate poverty and a matrix entitled "Freedom from poverty: action and partnerships", endorsed by the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions (CCPOQ), were circulated to all field representatives of United Nations system organizations. Organizations have also incorporated findings of the task forces into their work programmes. For instance, the reform agenda of the World Bank reflects the outcomes of the task forces on such issues as poverty, social development, international development cooperation and governance.

40. With the completion of the work of these three task forces, the responsibility for coordinated conference follow-up has devolved to ACC and its machinery, in particular CCPOQ, IACSD and IACWGE. CCPOQ was assigned a crucial role in this respect. In September 1998 it adopted a second ACC guidance note on follow-up to major international conferences. This note was sent to all field representatives of United Nations system organizations and to all United Nations resident coordinators. CCPOQ also indicated that it would continue to provide the resident coordinator system with system-wide guidance on the integrated follow-up to conferences. For that purpose, it will conduct a yearly analysis of the annual reports of resident coordinators, and will assess the implementation and usefulness of the outputs of the three ACC task forces and the first ACC guidance note on the follow-up to conferences.[17] CCPOQ also directed that the annual work plans and annual

[16] See summary of conclusions of ACC at its second regular session of 1998 (ACC/1998/20).

[17] The first such analysis will be presented to CCPOQ by the United Nations Development Group Office (UNDGO) in September 1999.

reports of the resident coordinator system devote considerably more attention to integrated follow-up to conferences, in addition to follow-up to individual conferences.[18]

41. Continued interaction between IACWGE and IACSD, on the one hand, and CCPOQ on the other, is important to ensure that operational activities reflect gender and sustainable development concerns. As recommended by the Council, CCPOQ and IACWGE have improved their collaboration.[19] The three committees have interacted with the United Nations Development Group for the preparation of the guidelines for the common country assessment and UNDAF. The continued cooperation among these four bodies is essential to ensure that UNDAF/common country assessment and strategic frameworks are prepared in a way that is conducive to implementation of major conference goals.

42. In addition, CCPOQ, IACSD and IACWGE are trying to develop proposals to expand the task manager system to include not only areas addressed by Agenda 21 but also relevant thematic outcomes of other global conferences. Organizations would thus take the lead in reporting on certain themes of conferences or on the outcomes of intergovernmental bodies of the United Nations system. Progress will be reported to the Council at future sessions since this expanded system of task managers will ultimately improve the work of the Council and its interaction with various parts of the system.

43. A common thread in the work of CCPOQ and IACWGE in the last year appears to be that while the broad principles, policies and objectives of United Nations system action for conference follow-up are largely agreed within the United Nations system and the main policy instruments are largely in place, there is a need to further support implementation through appropriate operational guidance and instruments, building on the work of the task forces. IACWGE continues its work to develop practical support for gender mainstreaming.[20] In a number of other areas, as proposed by CCPOQ, it would be important to further fine tune the cross-cutting themes identified at the world conferences, starting from the 12 themes agreed by the Council (see E/1995/86) with a view to identifying more selective and better defined issues that would benefit from a coordinated approach and supportive tools. The Council could encourage CCPOQ to engage in such a direction, in close cooperation with IACSD and IACWGE, with the support of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and UNDGO (see recommendation 15).

44. Finally, it may be noted that inter-agency collaboration is increasingly making use of networks and information technology. A good example is the network on rural development and food security, established by ACC for the follow-up to the World Food Summit (see box 3). A number of other electronic information networks have been established for the purpose of conference follow-up. They facilitate efficient follow-up to inter-agency and intergovernmental guidance, and support collaborative production of reports for reviewing conference implementation. CCPOQ is compiling a list of all these networks to promote their use. This list is to be completed in the course of 1999.

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[18] See second ACC guidance note on the integrated follow-up by the United Nations system to the major United Nations conferences.

[19] For instance, IACWGE convened at its fourth session a workshop with resident coordinators and agency field representatives around the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and of gender mainstreaming, with particular reference to the common country assessments and UNDAF. The workshop's recommendations were submitted to CCPOQ. The Chairperson of IACWGE participated in CCPOQ, and the Under-Secretary-General of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs subsequently addressed IACWGE as Chairman of both CCPOQ and IACSD.

[20] IACWGE is producing a compilation of good practices in gender mainstreaming and a database on gender training material and will convene an expert group meeting to review the experience, tools and processes, of the United Nations system in gender mainstreaming.

V. Integrating and coordinating conference implementation at the country level

45. National efforts to (a) ensure congruence of national policies and priorities with policy commitments included in conference outcomes, (b) determine the effectiveness of existing institutional structures, and (c) coordinate policies, particularly on conference cross-cutting issues, are crucial for achieving conference goals. Coordinating the implementation of the major conferences of the 1990s is a challenge for all countries. Coordination is particularly daunting in view of the many action plans and strategies mandated by conferences and the number of national institutions involved. The present section highlights aspects related to coordination in countries covered by the resident coordinator system.

Box 2
An example of national coordination to implement conference outcomes: Lebanon

The Government of Lebanon established in October 1997 an inter-ministerial committee on follow-up of global conferences and sustainable development to strengthen and coordinate actions of different mechanisms established in follow-up to each conference. In order to achieve that, the United Nations system prepared a comprehensive and coherent computerized framework for monitoring the progress in the implementation of the conferences of particular importance to Lebanon. The framework will facilitate national reporting, as well as provide a basis for the Government and interested parties to track progress and undertake new initiatives or remedial action in respect of commitments made at the global conferences.

46. While the global programmes of action provide overall blueprints for action in the various fields of development initiatives, the challenge is how to translate this in a coordinated and integrated way at the national level.

47. The analysis conducted by the General Assembly for the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system in 1998 confirmed that resident coordinators have an important role to play in assisting Governments in their responsibilities for the integrated implementation of the major international conferences.

48. Important progress has been made during the last year by the United Nations system at the country level, especially through a greater and more effective use of thematic groups as instruments to support national efforts for the coordinated follow-up to major global conferences in accordance with General Assembly resolution 53/192, and through the use of such frameworks as the common country assessment and UNDAF. This progress was facilitated by a number of ACC initiatives, in particular the follow-up to the work of the three ACC task forces and the ACC second guidance note on integrated conference follow-up.

49. The organizations of the system are expected to apply the ACC guidance principles and the guidelines of the task forces noted above, through collaborative programming and by supporting the establishment of inter-agency cross-cutting thematic groups. Thematic groups have become regular mechanisms of consultation within the United Nations system,

as well as coordination and policy dialogue mechanisms with Governments. They also identify system-wide measures to be taken in support of Government's follow-up actions to policy commitments made at conferences. These groups are functioning at various levels of effectiveness in most countries where the United Nations system is present. They facilitate policy dialogue, information exchange, identification of common development concepts, discussion of new proposals for joint or parallel action, and monitoring mechanisms (see box 3).

Box 3
ACC network on rural development and food security

The ACC network on rural development and food security, established by ACC in 1997, is entrusted with the responsibility to promote specific initiatives for the follow-up to the World Food Summit. The network relies on thematic groups at country level, within the framework of the resident coordinator system. It is managed by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), in close cooperation with WFP, and makes extensive use of information technology tools. It aims to (a) mobilize support for Governments' efforts to, *inter alia*, implement the World Food Summit; (b) foster complementarities and synergies between United Nations system organizations and other stakeholders; and (c) exchange information/best practices. Seventy-six country-level thematic groups are established or in the process of being established, nine of which work within the UNDAF framework. Activities include development of food security strategies, country nutrition profiles, emergency relief, participatory needs assessments, activities related to food security and vulnerability information and mapping systems, and rural development programmes.

50. The role of thematic groups for conference follow-up is further expected to be enhanced by the introduction and implementation of the common country assessment and UNDAF. In some cases, UNDAF has already provided a platform for the formulation of issue papers on follow-up to major world conferences, focusing on issues common to the United Nations system.[21]

51. A preliminary review of the 1998 resident coordinator annual reports and UNDAF pilot exercises shows that thematic groups work more effectively when they are linked to or are the result of combined efforts of major/key stakeholders and aim at developing a framework for a coordinated and integrated country-level response to cross-cutting themes derived from major international conferences, such as the country strategy note, the common country assessment and UNDAF, round tables and consultative groups. These mechanisms have the potential to provide the basis for a more coordinated and integrated United Nations system support to national efforts for conference follow-up by facilitating the placement/integration of conference specific commitments in the context of national

[21] For more detailed information on the use of thematic groups within the UNDAF exercise, see the progress report on operational activities of the United Nations system for international development cooperation (E/1999/__), which contains an updating of UNDAF activities, and the UNDG/Director General's Office comprehensive analysis of the 1998 resident coordinator annual reports to the CCPOQ working group, July 1999 session.

development programmes and strategies. This can also be instrumental in the formulation of national strategies and programmes.

52. The participation of the World Bank in thematic groups, particularly in countries where it is a major donor, has been an important factor in increasing the effectiveness of these groups as frameworks for coordinated follow-up to specific conferences. This has been especially the case with thematic groups established around cross-cutting themes chosen as the focus of consultative groups and round tables exercises.[22]

53. In general, thematic groups have been and will continue to be effective instruments for a coordinated United Nations system support to field-level follow-up activities of a number of individual world conferences, and their use should be extended to all conferences. HIV/AIDS thematic groups, supported by the Joint and Co-sponsored United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), could provide a model for other such theme groups in terms of (a) integrated approach, (b) level of participation, and (c) lessons learned.

54. However, thematic groups alone are not sufficient to achieve a holistic approach to the implementation and follow-up to the major global conferences. The common country assessment and UNDAF are designed to serve this purpose for the future, and their implementation is expected to redefine and extend the work and role of the thematic groups around defined cross-cutting issues. In particular, UNDAF provides the opportunity to increase synergies and complementarities between United Nations system organizations in policy dialogue with the Government, as well as to initiate further collaboration in new areas of assistance. In this regard, the link between UNDAF and the recently proposed comprehensive development framework of the World Bank needs to be clarified and explored.

55. Preliminary evidence from the country application of these instruments indicates that United Nations conferences have played a key role not only in determining the contents of these frameworks but also in influencing the support to national policies through enhanced collaborative programming of United Nations system activities.

56. At the country level, NGOs often contribute to the formulation and implementation of policies, programmes and projects designed to implement conference outcomes. To support the collaboration of the United Nations system with such organizations, CCPOQ adopted a guidance note for the resident coordinator system on operational collaboration of the United Nations system with civil society organizations, entitled "The partnership approach".[23]

VI. Evaluating integrated conference implementation

57. Evaluating conference implementation is above all the task of Governments themselves. But the United Nations system has a role to assist Governments, at their request, in assessing progress towards conference goals. United Nations system organizations also

[22] See also the report of the Secretary-General on collaboration between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions (E/1999/__).

[23] The approach combines actions by the United Nations system to strengthen the capacity of civil society organizations at the micro level and actions to support countries, at their request, in fostering an enabling environment for civil society organizations.

have a responsibility to assess the effectiveness of their activities in support of conference implementation, and are accountable to their governing bodies on this aspect.[24]

58. The Council, in its resolution 1998/44, also called upon organizations of the United Nations system to carry out evaluations of their activities in support of the coordinated implementation of conferences, taking into account their existing practices.[25] In a sense, the conferences, by setting a number of precise goals and targets, made it easier to monitor and evaluate activities as well as to move towards results- or outcomes-based programmes. For instance, UNICEF, because of the well defined goals and targets of the World Summit for Children, is able to report achievements in relation to the targets and goals of that Summit. Indeed, evaluations should ideally assess the extent to which main cross-cutting goals are being achieved and draw the lessons that can be learned from the system's experience so far.

59. UNDAF and the common country assessment provide important instruments for the organizations of the United Nations system to advance collaboration on monitoring and evaluation. In particular, the common country assessment provides a practical quantitative foundation for the assessment of conference follow-up by providing a framework for development indicators, recently suggested by UNDG along with the common country assessment and UNDAF revised guidelines. The indicator framework builds on existing global lists of indicators established by the United Nations, the World Bank and OECD, and the Minimum National Social Data Set, as well as the guidelines produced by ACC on basic social services for all. Therefore, the common country assessment may turn into an important tool for assisting interested Governments in monitoring the implementation of harmonized and coordinated follow-up to global conferences, by introducing an analytical foundation, often quantified through indicators, which will make it easier to monitor performance and achievements. The common country assessment will be more effective if it is used both as a basis for dialogue with the various stakeholders at the country level and in conjunction with the other mechanisms for follow-up to individual conferences already established at the country level. For example, IACWGE is undertaking work, with the World Bank as task manager, to review and improve gender impact analysis within the United Nations system with the ultimate objective to influence policies and increase coherence.

60. Finally, on 10 and 11 May 1999, the Council held an informal meeting with panels of experts on basic indicators for the integrated and coordinated implementation and follow-up of the major United Nations conferences and summits (see Council decision 1998/290). A key theme of the meeting was the need to build national statistical capacity through a collaborative United Nations system effort. It was also underscored that the Council had an important role to enhance international collaboration and coordination in the area of statistics, including guiding interaction between international organizations and national statistical offices on all matters related to conference follow-up. There were indications that the Council should continue to work on this issue at its current substantive session. The Council may wish to draw on the summary of that meeting (E/1999/_) and the report of the Secretary-General (E/1999/11) for its ongoing work on that topic.

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[24] The Council, in its resolution 1998/44, underscored the importance of monitoring and evaluation by intergovernmental bodies of the performance of the relevant parts of the United Nations system with respect to assisting countries in meeting the commitments from conferences.

[25] General analysis on evaluation of operational activities for development is addressed in the report on operational activities for development (E/1999/__; see also E/1998/48).

VII. Recommendations

61. The Council may wish to consider the following recommendations:

1. The Council may wish to call upon Governments, at the national and international levels, to review their efforts and commitments to implement cross-cutting conference themes and make more tangible progress towards the targets, goals and objectives set by conferences for the beginning of the twenty-first century.

2. The Council could consider devoting a coordination segment or another meeting to discussing the 20/20 initiative, at an appropriate time.

3. The Council could transmit to the General Assembly, as inputs into the five-year reviews of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the World Summit for Social Development, the Council's outcomes on (a) the role of employment and work in poverty eradication: the empowerment and advancement of women, (b) operational activities, in particular poverty eradication and capacity-building, and (c) coordination of implementation and coordinated follow-up by the United Nations system of initiatives on African development.

4. The Council may wish to guide its functional commissions and the United Nations system with a view to enhancing coordination and complementarity among the five-year reviews and on how best to follow up their outcomes in a coherent way. It could invite United Nations system organizations to coordinate their efforts to support the preparations for the above-mentioned five-year reviews. The Council could also encourage the bureaux of the preparatory committees for those five-year reviews to consult with one another to avoid duplication and ensure cross-fertilization of ideas.

5. The Council could decide to consider, at the earliest feasible time, options for the 10-year reviews of the series of conferences in the economic and social fields, drawing on the experience gained during the five-year reviews.

6. The Council could incorporate drug control into the cross-cutting conference themes and invite ACC to continue ensuring that United Nations system organizations take account of drug control issues as a cross-cutting conference theme.

7. The Council could recommend that the end-of-decade assessment of progress towards the goals of the World Conference on Education for All be linked to the five-year reviews of other conferences.

8. The Council could review the follow-up by the functional commissions of the decisions and recommendations of the Council addressed to them on the basis of a report prepared by the Secretary-General. It could invite its commissions to discuss follow-up to the Council's outcomes under a specific agenda item and on the basis of a note by the Secretariat highlighting the main aspects of the Council's guidance addressed to the commissions together with proposed follow-up actions.

9. The Council could encourage its functional commissions, in their outcomes, to identify more clearly actions that require a coordinated United Nations system-wide response as well as to highlight recommendations specifically addressed to United Nations system organizations and to identify areas in which the Council

could ensure that the agencies, funds and programmes implement the decisions and recommendations of the functional commissions addressed to them.

10. The Council could invite its President to transmit to the chairpersons of the executive boards of United Nations system organizations the guidance addressed by its functional commissions to United Nations system organizations.

11. The Council could encourage its functional and regional commissions to further enhance their substantive linkages and to reflect these in their programmes of work.

12. The Council could encourage continued efforts to ensure that the heads of the funds and programmes include in their annual reports to the Council a thorough analysis of problems encountered and lessons learned, with emphasis on, *inter alia*, issues arising from the follow-up to international conferences (see Assembly resolution 53/192).

13. The Council could encourage improved interaction between its functional commissions and the executive boards of the funds and programmes in particular. It could encourage the boards of the funds and programmes to invite the chairpersons of its functional commissions to present the most relevant outcomes of these commissions to the boards. It could also encourage joint bureaux meetings between the boards of the funds and programmes and of its functional commissions.

14. The Council could furthermore invite concerned specialized agencies to advise the Council on how to improve the way in which the outcomes of the Council, together with proposed follow-up actions, can be brought to the attention of their governing bodies, particularly concerning conference follow-up.

15. The Council could welcome the efforts of ACC and its standing machinery, and encourage the system to support the work of the Council and its functional and regional commissions, in particular in coordinating the follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits. The Council could invite the governing bodies of the funds and programmes and of the specialized agencies to address relevant aspects of themes from conferences to ensure greater coherence and complementarity in their work, and could request that the results of their deliberation be brought to the attention of the Council in an appropriate manner.

16. The Council could consider innovative modalities for engaging the private sector in conference follow-up and express support for the Secretary-General's efforts to build partnerships with the private sector and civil society to advance shared values and principles, in particular to achieve cross-cutting conference goals. It could invite United Nations system organizations to continue to concert their efforts, through ACC, to reach out to the private sector and civil society.

Annex I

Selected forthcoming major events that are related to United Nations conference follow-up

1999

Overall review of ICPD, General Assembly special session (30 June–2 July)

International Year of Older Persons

Overall review of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, General Assembly special session, September

Economic and Social Council high-level segment, on the theme "The role of employment and work in poverty eradication: the empowerment and advancement of women"

Economic and Social Council coordination segment, on the theme "Development of Africa: implementation and coordinated follow-up by the United Nations system of initiatives on African development"

World Conference on Science for the Twenty-first Century

2000

Millennium Assembly

Overall review of the World Summit for Social Development, General Assembly special session, Geneva, 26–30 June

Overall review of the Fourth World Conference on Women, General Assembly special session, 5–9 June

UNCTAD X, Thailand (early 2000)

General Assembly high-level meeting on the renewal of the dialogue on strengthening international economic cooperation for development through partnership

End-of-decade assessment of progress towards goals of the Education for All Conference

2001

Review of the World Summit for Children, General Assembly special session

Review of Habitat II, General Assembly special session (June)

Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (to be held in Europe, first half of 2001)

Five-year assessment of progress in implementing General Assembly resolution 50/225 on public administration and development

2002

Review by the General Assembly of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s

Comprehensive review of Agenda 21 and other outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development as well as the Programme of Work for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21

General Assembly high-level meeting on the renewal of the dialogue

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For the World Food Summit, a major progress assessment is scheduled for 2000–2006. Progress is to be monitored biennially in even-numbered years: people-centred objectives in 2000 and 2004, and development-centred objectives in 2002 and 2006.

Annex II

Guidance addressed by the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council to United Nations system organizations[a]

Outcome	*Guidance*
Statistical Commission (see E/1999/24)	International agencies and bilateral donors to assist countries in building sufficient statistical capacity in order to produce development information. United Nations funds and programmes to make statistical capacity-building a priority within UNDAF
Statistical Commission (see E/1999/24)	UNESCO Institute for Statistics to work in full collaboration with agencies doing related work; those agencies should integrate the Institute in their formal and informal collaborative arrangements
Agreed conclusions of the Commission on the Status of Women on women and health (see E/1999/27)	General guidance or recommendations for actions that should be taken into account by United Nations system organizations
Agreed conclusions of the Commission on the Status of Women on institutional mechanisms (see E/1999/27)	General guidance on actions to be taken by Governments and by institutional mechanisms. Actions to be taken by the international community, including the United Nations system, are contained in particular in section C (a), (b) and (e)–(k). This includes a call to development agencies to include in their programmes of assistance, activities that strengthen national machineries. The international community was also encouraged to document and publish "good practices", and to provide logistical support and ensure equal access to information technology, wherever appropriate. In this regard, resident coordinators, in particular the women-in-development programmes and gender units, should play a critical role. The Commission also called for developing and disseminating gender-disaggregated data and qualitative performance indicators to ensure effective gender-sensitive planning, monitoring, evaluation and implementation of programmes
Commission on the Status of Women resolution 43/3 on women and mental health, with emphasis on special groups (see E/1999/27)	United Nations bodies, in collaboration with relevant agencies, to address and support the mental health needs of women and girls through various measures and progress. WHO, in partnership with other organizations and through extrabudgetary resources, to develop and disseminate a training manual in that area for primary health-care workers, social service professionals and other community workers

Outcome	*Guidance*
Commission on the Status of Women resolution 43/2 on women, the girl child and HIV/AIDS (see E/1999/27)	United Nations agencies, funds and programmes to make combating HIV/AIDS a priority of the development agenda, and to implement effective prevention programmes and strategies, especially for the most vulnerable populations including women and girls; to intensify their support of national efforts against HIV/AIDS, particularly in favour of women and young girls, in the worst hit regions of Africa and where the epidemic is severely setting back development goals; and to assist Governments in addressing the conditions of children orphaned by AIDS, in adopting a long-term AIDS prevention policy and mainstreaming gender. Intensified efforts are requested from UNAIDS and its co-sponsors for policy and programmes regarding girls and women to address their situation in Africa and male involvement
Commission for Social Development resolution 37/2 entitled "International Year of Older Persons, 1999: towards a society for all ages" (see E/1999/26)	United Nations agencies and bodies to continue to support the United Nations programme on ageing in developing a long-term policy-oriented research agenda, and in facilitating promotional and coordination activities for 1999 and beyond
Commission for Social Development agreed conclusions on social services for all (see E/1999/26)	General guidance to be taken into account by United Nations system organizations
Commission on Sustainable Development decision on oceans and seas (see E/1999/29)	A number of steps are recommended to promote international cooperation in the framework of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and Agenda 21 in ensuring that oceans and seas remain sustainable; United Nations system to give priority to programmes for building capacities in this area; importance of regional cooperation for conservation and integrated and sustainable management and use of regional seas. United Nations system organizations to work with intergovernmental/regional organizations to identify technical solutions; United Nations system to review capacities in that area; relevant intergovernmental bodies to review the status of international agreements and programmes of actions related to the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and propose possible actions; importance of complementary actions by all on the International Coral Reef Initiative, United Nations system to provide information on its implementation by 2003; United Nations system organizations to collaborate with other partners in building capacities and mobilizing resources in support of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities and accord priority to projects implementing the Programme of Action; governing bodies of United Nations organizations to review their role to implement the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities and provide information thereon; sponsoring United Nations organizations of the Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection to improve its effectiveness and inclusiveness; intergovernmental agencies concerned with oceans to consider whether their programmes of

Outcome	*Guidance*
	work make sufficient allowance for considerations of the potential impact of increased climate variability and to review through coordination arrangements what more needs to be done to ensure adequate understanding of the impact of phenomena, such as the El Niño phenomenon; relevant institutions to enhance collaboration with each other and to develop, at both the intergovernmental and inter-agency levels, a more integrated approach to all legal, economic, social and environmental aspects of the oceans and seas. The Secretary-General, working with relevant United Nations organizations, to improve the effectiveness of the work of the ACC Subcommittee on Oceans and Coastal Areas; specific recommendations to individual agencies, such as UNEP, FAO, UNESCO and IMO
Commission on Sustainable Development decision on changing consumption and production patterns (see E/1999/29)	International organizations to take actions to fulfil their role in changing unsustainable production and consumption patterns; international organizations should cooperate with Governments to (a) develop and implement policies and measures for promoting sustainable consumption and production patterns, (b) implement a number of actions in the area of natural resources management and cleaner production, as guided by the Commission; international organizations should cooperate with Governments to undertake studies on the impact of globalization on consumption and production patterns and on related areas, such as regarding the role of the financial sector; international organizations to cooperate with Governments to assess and address the impacts of urbanization in the context of sustainable development, and to increase efforts to address the critical issues of water and sanitation in human settlements in developing countries; recommendations to UNEP and UNIDO
Commission on Sustainable Development decision on tourism and sustainable development (see E/1999/29)	World Tourism Organization, in collaboration with the United Nations system, to promote sustainable tourism development to increase the benefits from tourism resources for host communities and maintain their cultural/ environmental integrity, support national efforts in this area, promote integrated planning approaches to sustainable tourism development, and take a number of other measures including information exchange, studies, research and pilot projects; agencies to evaluate whether regulations on maritime pollution and compliance with them are sufficient; recommendations addressed to specific organizations, such as the World Tourism Organization, IMO, UNEP and the Convention on Biological Diversity
Commission on Sustainable Development decision on education, public awareness and training (see E/1999/29)	UNESCO and relevant United Nations bodies to intensify their collaborative efforts in implementing the Work Programme on Education for Sustainable Development; relevant United Nations organizations to integrate aspects of sustainable development in their educational policies and to cooperate in the framework of the above Work Programme

Outcome	*Guidance*
Commission on Sustainable Development decision on information provided by Governments and exchange of national experience (see E/1999/29)	A general recommendation to the international community to support the efforts of developing countries for capacity-building (in relation to national reporting, including voluntary reporting); UNDP to consider assisting developing countries in elaboration/translation/ dissemination of national reports

[a] Based on outcomes of the Commission on Population and Development, the Commission on the Status of Women, the Statistical Commission, the Commission for Social Development and the Commission on Sustainable Development.

United Nations A/54/123 - E/1999/66

General Assembly
Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
7 June 1999

Original: English

General Assembly
Fifty-fourth session
Item 110 of the preliminary list*
Advancement of women

Economic and Social Council
Substantive session of 1999
Item 14 (a) of the provisional agenda**
Social and human rights questions: advancement of women

Improvement of the situation of women in rural areas

Report of the Secretary-General

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* A/54/50.
** E/1999/100 and Add.1.

99-17040 (E) 300699

I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 52/93 of 12 December 1997, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to prepare, in consultation with Member States, a comprehensive report on the current status of rural women and prospects for improving their situation, and to submit it, through the Economic and Social Council, to the General Assembly in 1999.

2. Towards that end, the Secretary-General circulated a note verbale to all Member States and a letter to the specialized agencies and to other United Nations entities soliciting contributions to the report. Replies were received from 14 Governments and eight specialized agencies and other United Nations entities.[1] The replies were incorporated into the present report and will also be reflected in the review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.[2]

3. The issue of rural women has been addressed at various United Nations conferences and summits[3] and is contained in their respective final documents, including declarations and plans of action. Issues relating to rural women are raised throughout the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women also attach considerable significance to the situation of rural women.[4] The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women obligates States Parties to "take into account the particular problems faced by rural women and the significant roles which rural women play in the economic survival of their families, including their work in the non-monetized sectors of the economy", and to "take all appropriate measures to ensure the application of the provisions of the present Convention to women in rural areas".[5] Further, the issue of rural women remains critical to the development discourse and strategy-making process because of the central role of rural women in both the productive and reproductive spheres, as demonstrated by their involvement in agricultural production and care-giving.

4. The questions of equal access to productive resources, such as land, capital, credit and technology, and to gainful employment, markets, education and health, including family planning services, are critically important for rural women. So are infrastructure developments such as rural electrification, water supply and childcare facilities. Furthermore, the full and equal participation of women in rural institutions and decision-making and specific measures to improve the status of women are still critical to any strategy aimed at the improvement of the situation of rural women. Most of these issues have been dealt with extensively in the past reports of the Secretary-General.[6]

5. Since the preparation of the 1997 report, the context within which the above issues is considered has changed significantly as the process of market integration which has characterized the global economy for some time has accelerated. The greater interdependence among different national economies sets new priorities and poses new policy considerations for Governments. This changing context and its impact on women, including rural women, within the world of work will be considered in the forthcoming 1999 edition of *World Survey on the Role of Women in Development*, which was requested by the General Assembly in its resolutions 40/204 and 49/161 and which will be before the Assembly for its consideration at its fifty-fourth session. The *World Survey* examines the economic development in terms of increased participation of women in paid work, the increasingly casual and informal nature of employment, and the increasing trend towards privatized and commercialized agriculture.

6. The present report outlines the impact of global trends and their policy implications for the situation of rural women and considers questions of access to productive resources, inputs and services. It was prepared on the basis of a review of existing literature, in addition to the replies from Member States and United Nations entities to the note verbale and the letter of the Secretary-General. The topics were selected because they featured prominently in the replies. By analysing the situation of rural women within the context of emerging trends and policy considerations, the report aims to identify guidelines for new strategies for improving the situation of rural women in accordance with the objectives of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

7. The Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 1997/60 of 25 July 1997, decided to carry out a comprehensive review of the theme of poverty eradication during its substantive session in 1999. The present report therefore aims to contribute to the Council's deliberations on that theme by drawing attention to the continuing poverty of rural women in spite of their considerable role in agricultural production. The issue of rural women's poverty also featured prominently in the replies of Member States and United Nations entities to the note verbale and letter of the Secretary-General.

II. Trends and policy issues pertaining to the situation of rural women

8. The context in which rural women experience poverty, engage in agricultural production, and struggle for access to the productive resources, inputs and services that are crucial for optimal participation in socio-economic activities has changed considerably. It is more then ever before governed by a process characterized by the liberalization of trade and markets for food and other products, increasing privatization of resources and services, the reorientation of economic policies under structural adjustment programmes, and increased commercialization of agriculture.

9. Agricultural development policies in developing countries are becoming more oriented towards reliance on markets and private agents.[7] With the commercialization of agriculture, the market place has a more important role to play than it did in the past. More inputs into agricultural production processes are acquired through the market, and more agricultural outputs are sold through the market than has hitherto been the case. Farmers now have to shift from subsistence agricultural production to the growing of cash and export crops.

10. The liberalization policies which are part of structural adjustment programmes promote the elimination of trade and market barriers and the reduction of government-financed price supports for basic agricultural commodities. They favour large-scale farming and the production of commercial cash and export crops over food crops for household and local consumption, on the assumption that increases in income from exports will ensure national food security.[8] Further, these policies involve the scaling-down of government-sponsored agricultural services, such as training and extension services, thus reducing the ability of small farmers and rural households to benefit from market forces through skill enhancement. They also involve a reduction in investment in rural infrastructure which, owing to poor and deteriorating rural infrastructure such as roads, reduces the market access of rural people, especially rural women.

11. The privatization of productive resources and inputs is part of this process. Although markets are, in theory, open to everyone, poor rural people, especially women, are unable to take advantage of the market system because they lack three essentials: information about new laws and programmes; the money to purchase land; and access to credit.

12. One consequence of globalization is a rural economy that is more integrated within both the national and the global markets. As a result, in the rural economy, cash and wage income has become as critical as access to land, if not more critical. A study on the impact of privatization on gender and property rights in sub-Saharan Africa concludes that women who are able to accumulate enough money to buy land are usually employed, urban women or women in peri-urban areas who grow food for the urban market.[9]

13. Thus, to the extent that cash and wage income has become central to household food security in the rural areas of developing countries, the crucial factor in rural economies is monetization. Access to cash is a major bottleneck for the poor and the landless when acquiring other productive resources and inputs necessary for survival.

14. Rural households are responding to the uncertainties and opportunities created by the increased dependence on the market by diversifying their household resource base by restructuring the division of labour within the household. In this restructuring, some members of the household remain on the land, freeing others to seek work elsewhere. Therefore, instead of permanent out-migration, as was the case during earlier periods of modernization of agriculture, a temporary/seasonal, short-term movement of labour seems to be on the rise. This phenomenon has been referred to in the literature as "circular migration", or as a land-based/free-floating labour force.[10] The actual adaptive patterns vary significantly across the globe. Depending upon the prevailing norms and patterns of gender relations and the opportunities, household strategies may favour either male or female migration. In the Middle East and Africa, women have generally taken over the work on the land, freeing male members of the household to migrate in search of work elsewhere, while in Latin America and Asia, women for a long time have been the principal labour migrants, internally and internationally.

15. Such strategies at the household level are clearly a response to the process of globalization which favours the free movement of capital and restricts the movement of labour. Both the available data and the existing tools of analysis are insufficient for understanding these processes of change in rural communities. There is need for further comparative research to depict the diverse yet common aspects of the way in which rural people, particularly rural women, have responded, and are responding, to change.

16. At the macro level, the international policy framework which is being driven by the process of globalization has a direct impact on the well-being and options of rural people, and rural women in particular. The twin policies of structural adjustment and privatization were in part a response to changing patterns in the flows of trade and finance. The terms of trade for commodity exports of the developing

countries have been declining steadily. Development assistance from the developed to the developing countries has also been declining.

17. In order to cope with the resultant reduced earnings, balance-of-payment problems and debt crises, many Governments in developing countries have had to curtail their budget expenditures, particularly social-sector expenditures. This situation has clear gender implications. Although both women and men lose out directly from cuts in expenditures on education, health, and other social-sector budget lines, the cost for women, particularly rural women, is more severe, since women experience increased demand for their unpaid labour because of their greater role in reproductive activities. For example, cuts in the health budget increase the care-giving responsibilities of rural women, while cuts in rural infrastructure developments, such as irrigation and water supply systems, increase their time burden. This is in addition to lower returns on women's labour in terms of their wages and income from cash and export crops as a result of the deteriorating terms of trade for agricultural commodities.

18. There has been a dramatic but uneven increase in the flow of private capital, particularly equity capital, to developing countries.[11] In order to alleviate the balance-of-payment and debt problems and to increase income, many developing countries have adopted "investor friendly" policies such as low or no corporate taxes, tax holidays, subsidies to investors, and privatization.

19. The pursuit of such policies has gender implications similar to those described above, because a combination of low or no corporate tax and low earnings from depressed commodity prices results in the erosion of the fiscal base of the State. This results in budget cuts, particularly in the social sector, which have the same dual impact on women, especially rural women, noted above.

20. Since equity capital constitutes a major proportion of the private capital flows to developing countries, many such countries are seeking to attract capital by pursuing policies of privatization of productive assets such as land. Access to land is now being mediated through the market. As discussed below (paras. 28–34) and in prior reports, the issue of access to land and other productive assets remains critical to rural women. In the market system emerging as a result of privatization, women, who generally have few assets or property, little cash income and minimal political power, are being left on the periphery.[12]

21. Liberalization policies have had their successes, particularly in terms of employment opportunities for women. Some African countries have diversified their commodity exports to include non-traditional agricultural exports such as flowers and luxury fruits. Earnings from these exports have risen very rapidly in recent years, and women comprise the majority of the workforce in the sector. They are paid in cash for their labour, whereas on family farms, their labour was unremunerated.[13] In Latin America, especially Mexico and Colombia, in the well-established non-traditional agricultural export sector, women comprise the majority of the workforce. However, the wages are, in relation to profit, quite low, and the occupational hazards can be severe.[14]

22. Liberalization policies go hand in hand with the policy of commercialization of agriculture in developing countries. Through such policies, multinational corporations are consolidating their involvement in agriculture with mixed outcomes for rural women. For example, in Thailand, women working on family-owned land under contract to multinational companies earned cash income for the first time after years of unpaid labour in intensive rice cultivation.[15] However, the vertical integration of the agricultural sector which comes with the involvement of multinational corporations makes rural household food security vulnerable to market fluctuations.

23. These evolving policy issues provide the context in which rural women struggle to gain access to productive resources, services and inputs. First, the integration of rural economies within both the national and the international markets means that governmental policies on their own cannot determine the access of rural women to productive resources and services. Secondly, the "static" approach of provision of access to productive resources such as land will not suffice. A much more dynamic approach is now required — one that entails the empowerment of the rural poor, particularly rural women, by increasing the capabilities that will enable them to navigate the market system.

24. The need for strengthening the capabilities of the rural poor, especially of rural women, has been acknowledged in the replies from Governments to the Secretary-General's note verbale. Most of the Governments referred to their commitment to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and gave detailed accounts of newly created or existing institutional arrangements for the advancement of rural women and for strengthening their role in agriculture. Many outlined measures that have been or are being undertaken to ensure women's participation in decision-making and rural institutions. Support for and cooperation with women's groups and non-governmental organizations is a feature of all governmental strategies aimed at improving the situation of rural women. For their part, the United Nations entities

indicated their support in terms of financing, training and provision of information to women's groups and non-governmental organizations and of governmental efforts to involve women in decision-making and rural institutions. This strategic approach by the specialized agencies is tied to their efforts to mainstream a gender perspective into their respective fields of operation.

25. Support for women's full involvement in decision-making and participation in rural institutions and for rural women's increased personal and organizational capabilities is important, because access to productive resources, services and inputs is negotiated within a political and socio-economic institutional framework that tends to be gender-biased.[16]

III. Access to productive resources and services

26. The question of access to productive resources and services has been the subject of past reports.[6] It is being considered in the present report within the context of the new trends and policy developments. Access to productive resources, services and inputs is essential if the rural poor, especially rural women, are to be raised out of poverty and enabled fully to contribute to sustainable human development. This is in tandem with the new approaches to poverty alleviation, discussed below in section IV, which focus on both entitlements and human capabilities.

27. In their replies to the note verbale, most of the Governments identified access to productive resources, particularly land, as critical to the improvement of the situation of women. Many of the replies[17] focused on legal reforms which have been introduced to ensure rural women's access to land. The United Nations entities[18] also identified access to land as crucial for rural women and reported that they were assisting Governments, through projects and financing, to realize the objective of providing access to productive resources to rural women.

A. Access to land

28. Land is a critical resource for rural women. It is important for food production for the household and for market-oriented agricultural activities. Land ownership is also critical to raising the social status of rural women and to facilitating their access to benefits and services such as credit and extension, which tend to be conditional on land as collateral.

29. According to the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), access to land for the rural poor can be effected in the following ways: land redistribution (from larger holdings above a certain size); adjudication of traditional land systems (basically privatization of land previously held under customary tenure); settlement schemes (setting up poor families on newly developed and/or government-owned land for cultivation and/or grazing); and the establishment of individual usufruct (use) rights or community rights.[19] The implementation of such measures, with due cognizance of a gender perspective, can reduce income inequality and human poverty. Rural women can increase their income and contribute to poverty alleviation and sustainable human development if they have access to land.

30. Due to factors such as population growth, desertification and land degradation, arable land per member of the agricultural population of most developing countries has been declining for the past 30 years.[20] Many developing countries have either exhausted their land frontier or cannot afford the cost of new land development.

31. The reduction in available land is further exacerbated in many developing countries by the concentration of land ownership in the hands of a small fraction of the landholders. In Latin America, the region with the highest such concentration, 1.3 per cent of the landowners hold 71.6 per cent of the land under cultivation.[21] Inequality in land ownership is actually greater than the data indicate, because many small holders, particularly women, sharecrop or lease their holdings, and many rural poor have no land at all. Most of Latin America is characterized by *latifundios*, large land-grant estates owned by the few, and *minifundios*, small poor holdings that rarely provide adequate employment on subsistence for a family.[22] These levels of concentration of land also prevail in a number of sub-Saharan African countries such as Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe.

32. The policy trends of privatization and commercialization of agriculture favour the consolidation of land and tend to negate legal and agrarian reforms that would bring about a fair distribution of land in rural communities or among rural women. For example, current agricultural policy in sub-Saharan Africa is encouraging the trend towards concentration of land ownership. The assumption is that large-scale and commercial crop-farming will increase productivity and thus ensure national food security.[23] Such policy runs the risk of favouring already better-off farmers, mainly men, who will receive the largest share of the national resources of land, capital, credit and foreign exchange, while women farmers, who are the main

food producers on the continent, will be left in the marginalized and stagnating small-holder sector.[24]

33. The impact of land concentration is compounded by changing property rights regimes, from customary to private. Within customary regimes, women have a tenuous hold on land, their access being indirect and generally dependent on male relatives. Therefore, they are generally unable to claim any ownership rights during the transition to private property regimes, and thus end up landless. In most cases their former user rights under the customary regime also disappear.

34. Theoretically, within the new context of private property regimes rural women should be able to purchase land. However, in practice they generally lack the necessary cash or access to credit.

B. Access to water

35. Water is both a basic human need and an important productive resource. It helps to improve domestic hygiene and health and enhances childcare as well as crop and/or animal care.[25] Access to clean water is likely to have a marked effect on the amount of time women have for other productive activities or for reproductive activities such as childcare.

36. Irrigation is a land-augmenting activity. It increases agricultural productivity in land under cultivation, enables farmers to grow several crops per year, regulates the flow of water and assists in the conservation of water. Because it increases output, access to irrigation increases household food security and household income. Although it may increase labour-intensive tasks, by and large, it lightens the burden of rural women's work.[26]

37. Unfortunately, investment in irrigation infrastructure and water distribution is low in many developing countries. Only 35 per cent of the crop land in Asia is irrigated, and only 5 per cent in sub-Saharan Africa.[27] Moreover, small farmers, including rural women, tend to have limited access to existing irrigation and water distribution infrastructure. For example, in some cases, large-scale, influential farmers get first chance at available water, before it trickles down to the less influential — mostly women farmers.[28] In other cases, women farmers, lacking the necessary connections and power in the local "irrigators committee" or with the Government's "water delegate", find themselves confined to night-time irrigation.[29]

38. Even if access to water were not a problem, women farmers seldom have the savings, credit, or incentive to invest in wells and other water projects. Moreover, rural women are often not involved in the technical management and planning of water and irrigation use, and their interests are therefore often ignored or marginalized. Further, as in the case of land, existing water rights regimes often exclude and marginalize rural women and thus constrain their ability to benefit from water resources and to use them optimally in their farming activities.[30]

39. Aside from access to water, farmers require other inputs such as energy resources, seeds and fertilizer. Programmes like rural electrification are capital intensive and have not been implemented successfully in many developing countries. They are usually only successful as part of a comprehensive rural development strategy aimed at raising rural incomes and expanding the rural economic base. Ready access to energy and water is a significant precondition for reducing what is referred to as the "time poverty"[31] of women, because it eliminates the need to collect water and fuelwood which is a major component of a rural woman's time budget.

C. Access to technology and research

40. Many countries[32] emphasized the need for rural women's access to technology and research. This need is linked to training and access to information through extension services, rural women's groups and non-governmental organizations. Some of the United Nations entities[33] also emphasized the need for access to technology and basic technical know-how for rural women if they were not to be marginalized by the broader macro-level developments that are having an impact on their lives and the agricultural sector.

41. Technological advances in the agricultural sectors of developing countries have often been carried out without due consideration of local conditions or availability of resources and without consultation with the local people, particularly rural women.[34] Successful agricultural technologies tend to be appropriated by the big landowners who have knowledge, capital, and institutional connections. Rural women generally lack those advantages and therefore tend to be marginalized in acquiring technology.

42. It is important for technology to match local resources and social conditions. For example, the success of capital-intensive mechanization in raising production in the United States of America and Canada cannot be duplicated in developing countries without significant cost in terms of unemployment and dislocation. The displacement of rural labour by capital-intensive technology hits rural women harder than men, because the household food security for

which they have primary responsibility is increasingly dependent on wage income from seasonal work on big farms and plantations. Mechanization can also exacerbate the existing problem of consolidation of landownership, because of the general requirement of economies of scale in order to ensure profitability from technological investments.

43. In the developing countries, the labour-to-land ratio is high, and labour is much cheaper than capital. Thus, technological advances that are land-augmenting — in that they add to the productivity of the land — and that result in an increase in the need for labour will be more appropriate there. The Japanese model of focusing on biological and chemical technology (such as new seeds and fertilizer) and on a high ratio of farm workers per cultivated hectare may be more suited to the developing countries than the mechanization approach of North America.

44. The introduction of new technology in rural areas is often risky. Women farmers are reluctant to accept technological advances whose risks, particularly in terms of the impact on household food security, are not known or are not adequately covered.[35] Many of the technologies developed for the rural areas of developing countries have failed, and this has heightened the distrust of exogenous technology.[36] There are instances of family incomes falling, sometimes to the detriment of household survival, when innovations have been introduced. From a rural woman's perspective, family survival is more important than maximizing long-run output. Therefore, it is more important to avoid any possibility of crop failure than to test new, unproven innovations. In many instances the new methods may not be adapted to local farming conditions, for they may have been inadequately tested in a different environment, and they may have adverse side effects.[37]

45. Rural women are generally not involved in selecting agricultural research topics, and therefore the research agenda does not focus on technology that is suitable for small farmers and labourers or on foods, such as cassava and millet, that loom large in poor people's budgets.[38]

46. Consultation and making information available through extension services is important, particularly to rural women, in order to ensure acceptance of useful technology, such as labour-saving technologies. Household labour-saving devices such as fuel-efficient stoves and food-grinding machines will increase the amount of time women have for productive and reproductive activities and for leisure and self-improvement.

D. Access to extension services

47. Extension personnel have a crucial role in furthering the access of the rural poor, especially women, to productive resources and new technologies and linking them to research and planning institutions. They should be able to transmit the findings and innovations of agricultural research to the farmers; convey simple technical information and demonstrate it personally; identify difficulties; direct farmers to sources of technical advice and training; identify farmers who are credit risks; and arrange for fertilizer, seeds and other inputs from sources such as government depots.

48. Unfortunately, agricultural extension programmes in many developing countries are not very successful and tend to be gender-biased.[39] Extension personnel tend to be male, ill-paid, ill-trained, and ill-equipped to provide technical help in a gender-sensitive manner. In many instances, they are beholden to the large, influential farmers and neglect the small farmers, who have far less education and political power. They often neglect women, in spite of the demonstrated contribution of women to agriculture.[40]

49. Given the critical role of the extension service in the agricultural sector, such neglect has a significant negative impact on rural women's farming activities. They miss out on critical information regarding new seeds, fertilizers, technological advances and even training and credit. The extension service might be more effective if it included more women and trained its staff in gender-sensitive delivery of services. Extension services should liaise closely with and could be integrated with rural women's groups and non-governmental development organizations, such as loan banks, irrigation authorities, seed and fertilizer distribution centres, agrarian reform agencies, and cooperative organizations.

IV. Overview of the situation of rural women

A. Poverty

50. In all of the replies to both the note verbale and the letter of the Secretary-General, there was reference to the prevalence of poverty among the rural poor, especially among rural women. Some Governments[41] and some of the specialized agencies[42] outlined their strategies for poverty alleviation. Most centred on employment creation and basic social-sector investments. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), however,

pointing to the East and South-East Asian experience, emphasized the importance of balanced economic growth for the alleviation of poverty and for the socio-economic advancement of women.

51. Poverty, whether it is defined as the lack of a minimally adequate income or as the lack of essential human capabilities, is still pervasive in the world, particularly in the developing world. Between 1989 and 1994, the percentage of the population in developing countries surviving on income of US $1.00 or less per day was 32, ranging from a low of 4 per cent in the Middle East to a high of 45 per cent in South Asia.[43] By another measure — mortality by the age of 40 — the percentage of the total population for all developing countries in 1995 was 14, ranging from a high of 31 per cent for sub-Saharan Africa to a low of 7 per cent for East Asia.[44] The female illiteracy rate for 1995 was 38 per cent for all developing countries, ranging from a low of 15 per cent for Latin America and the Caribbean to a high of 63 per cent for South Asia.[45] Two thirds of the world's 900 million illiterate adults are women,[46] a majority of whom reside in the rural areas of developing countries.

52. The rural poor as a percentage of the population of developing countries is estimated at 37 per cent. The highest rate is 66 per cent for sub-Saharan Africa; Latin America follows with a rural poverty rate of 59 per cent; South and South-East Asia, with 44 per cent; the Middle East, with 34 per cent; and East Asia, with 11 per cent.[47]

53. Analysis of gender and poverty starts from the assumption that women are poorer than men and is primarily based on measures of income poverty, with a greater emphasis on quantitative data than on qualitative indicators. Using the household as the basic unit of analysis, particularly the comparison of female-headed households to male-headed households, the conclusion is drawn that among women, the incidence of poverty is higher and more severe and, in relation to that of men, is increasing. This phenomenon is commonly referred to as the "feminization of poverty".[48] However, owing to differences in the conceptualization of female-headed households, there is some ambiguity and disagreement as to its meaning and extent. Rural households where the men, particularly husbands, are working away from the land are not necessarily female- headed households. Moreover, if such households receive remittances from the absent men, they would be marginally — if not substantially — better off than households — male- or female-headed — that receive no remittances. Another problem is the assumption of the homogeneity of rural women, without consideration of other factors such as level of education, class, race and region. However, there is consensus that, despite these variations, due to gender inequality, the process and experience of poverty is different for women than it is for men. Further research is needed to quantify and explain the impact of poverty on rural women.

54. An exclusive focus on income poverty results in the design and implementation of policies and programmes that aim principally at income-generating activities for women. This approach has tangible, although short-term, benefits but fails to reflect the full extent of women's poverty. It also fails to deal directly with fundamental concerns such as gender inequality in access to assets and resources.

55. Poverty is a complex phenomenon, and UNDP through the *Human Development Reports* has sought to extend its conceptualization from income poverty to human poverty by incorporating a capabilities/entitlements approach into the analysis.[49] In the case of rural women, such an approach involves considering capabilities such as literacy, levels of health and nutrition, and entitlement to assets and resources such as land, irrigation, capital and extension services. A focus on asset and resource distribution, along with income, provides a more sensitive measure of poverty. This comprehensive approach to poverty yields an unequivocal answer to the question of whether or not women are poorer than men.

56. Gender-based inequality within most households, reinforced and enhanced within the legal, cultural, social, economic, and institutional spheres, contributes to women being poorer then men. The prerogatives that accrue to men within this framework are such that men can, and mostly do, appropriate the labour of women for "their" crops without sharing the income generated from those crops. Since the income will not necessarily be applied to household needs, rural women are left to fend for the household.

57. In addition to using the labour of women for "their" crops, men, having recourse to tradition and cultural norms, may prevent women from engaging in other economic activities, such as gainful employment or self-employment in the informal sector. This denies women opportunities for advancement and perpetuates their low status within the family and society. Although causality has yet to be fully proven, there is a link, at the aggregate level, between gender inequality and human poverty, such that households, in which women have a lower status also tend to be poorer.[50]

58. Poverty tends to reproduce poverty and gender inequality facilitates the intergenerational transmission of poverty through women. A poor, malnourished mother is more likely to give birth to a child of low birth weight. In the case of a girl child, the outlook is very bleak, because gender-based discrimination will reduce her opportunities

to enhance her capabilities and deny her a significant amount of entitlement to productive resources, just as it did to her mother. She will be given early responsibilities, particularly in the reproductive sphere, and she may be forced into early marriage.

59. Gender inequality fosters violence against women. In a poor rural household where women have less access to information about their rights and even lesser access to institutions that are supposed to enforce them, violence tends to persist. Violence against women is not only a violation of human rights; it also has social and economic costs, and reinforces the low status of women which is positively correlated with human poverty.

60. Poverty is reflected in undernourishment and malnourishment, which are common features of life in the rural areas of developing countries and which result mostly from inadequate income or purchasing power, lack of know-how and differential access within the household, rather than from food shortages.[51]

61. There is still substantial hunger, both transitory and chronic, in the rural areas of many developing countries, particularly before the beginning of a new harvest. Poor farming families cannot afford to purchase food just before harvests, when cash resources are lowest and prices are highest. In an attempt to bolster their purchasing capacity, poor rural households are forced to sell their labour, at the expense of their own farming, and obtain credit at high interest rates to ensure survival through the hungry season. They work for richer farmers to guarantee their short-term survival and settle for lower earnings from their own farms. This results in less income and high interest payments in the future and leads to continued indebtedness.[52]

62. Furthermore, small farmers, in their attempt to increase income, switch their focus to cash crops and stop producing or reduce their production of early maturing food crops that would fill the hunger gap between harvests. This leads to a poverty trap characterized by hunger, indebtedness and low-paid hard work. Hunger, however, has a gender dimension. Because of gender inequality within most households, women and girls are at the end of the food chain. Their diet is low in calories and low in protein, which results in weight loss and greater chances of contracting diseases. Hunger inhibits their critical role in food production. When the food security of the household is threatened, the burden of more hard work falls mainly on women, because they have primary responsibility for household food security and therefore have to work harder to make ends meet.

63. Another indicator of poverty is the time burden on women. There are significant time allocation differentials between women and men in the rural areas of developing countries. Women work longer hours than men and carry heavier workloads which involve simultaneously performing multiple roles in both the productive and reproductive spheres. Analysis of time-use patterns in Cameroon showed that women's weekly hours of labour activity were close to 70, compared to 30 for men.[53] Furthermore, village transport surveys in the United Republic of Tanzania and Ghana demonstrate that in transport-related activities, such as collecting water and fuelwood or carrying farm produce to the market, women spend nearly three times as much time as men.[54] The simultaneity of many of the household chores that rural women have to perform increases the intensity of their work.

64. Further, rural women's health concerns reflect the multiplicity of their roles. Their illnesses negatively affect their productive capacities, with detrimental impact on the family's food security and well-being. For example, HIV and AIDS are having a significant impact on the well-being of rural women in terms of their own health, which in turn affects their productive capacity and ability to look after their families. Having the principal responsibility for household food security, their reduced productive capacity has wide implications for rural poverty.

65. The illness of family members due to HIV and AIDS imposes an additional demand on the labour and time of rural women, necessitating extended caregiving on their part as part of their reproductive responsibilities. The burden falls disproportionately on older women and the girl child. A study of six rural districts in Uganda showed an emerging trend among AIDS orphans, who are cared for primarily by their grandparents, particularly grandmothers,[55] in view of socially assigned gender roles.[56] This situation prevails across much of sub-Saharan Africa where HIV and AIDS have emerged as the leading cause of death.[57]

66. Of all the investments made in people, education — particularly primary education — is considered the most effective one for overcoming poverty and achieving income equality. This is particularly true in developing countries where studies have shown consistently higher returns from primary education.[58] The education of girls is particularly critical for securing the future socio-economic well-being of a country and its people. Research has shown that the education of girls improves household nutrition and reduces fertility and child mortality.[59]

67. In spite of the fact that the education of girls will be beneficial to society, girls and women face persistent discrimination in school enrolment, adult education and literacy programmes. The discrimination is pronounced in

many developing countries of Africa, the Middle East and South Asia.[60] Gender inequality and poverty, which impose harsh trade-offs within the household, lie at the heart of the bias against girls and women in education. Girls are perceived as less useful than boys and the returns from their education as lower, particularly in the face of labour-market discrimination and cultural practices such as early marriage, which often put women outside the sphere of remunerative work.

B. Role in agricultural production

68. Rural women are of critical importance in agricultural production and in the rural economies of developing countries, playing through a multiplicity of roles: co-farmers or unpaid family workers on farms or small enterprises owned by the head of the household or other family members; own-account farmers; and/or entrepreneurs in the informal sector. Rural women also work full-time or part-time on large farms and plantations as wage labourers. They also contribute to the subsistence of the household by organizing community-based informal labour- and resource-exchange groups among themselves.

69. In sub-Saharan Africa, women contribute an average of 70 per cent of the total labour expended in food production for the household and for trade. Their contribution ranges from 30 per cent in Sudan to 80 per cent in the Congo. The proportion of women in the economically active labour force in agriculture ranges from 48 per cent in Burkina Faso to 73 per cent in the Congo.[61]

70. In Asia, there are considerable variations by country but, overall, women account for some 50 per cent of agricultural production. They constitute approximately 46 per cent of the agricultural labour force in Bangladesh, Nepal and the Philippines, 35 per cent in Malaysia, 54 per cent in Indonesia, and over 60 per cent in Thailand.[62] Asia has experienced a steady increase in female employment in the manufacturing sector since the process of export-led industrialization began. It is not very clear what the impact of the current financial crisis will be on employment patterns in the manufacturing sector and therefore on the extent to which retrenched female labour will revert to the agricultural sector.

71. In the Pacific, women play a dominant role in fisheries and food marketing as well as in the labour-intensive processing of cash crops such as palm oil, copra, coconut oil, vanilla, coffee and cocoa. In Papua New Guinea women make up 71 per cent of the agricultural labour force; in Fiji they constitute about 38 per cent.[63]

72. In most countries of the Middle East and North Africa, women as part of the household labour force play a major role in agriculture. For example, 55.3 per cent of unpaid agricultural labour in Turkey is performed by women; the figure is 53.2 per cent in Morocco, 50.7 per cent in Egypt, 40.7 per cent in Lebanon, 30.7 per cent in Iraq, and 28 per cent in Mauritania.[64]

73. In Latin America and the Caribbean, women contribute an average of 40 per cent to the process of agricultural production, and they are also increasingly employed in the production of non-traditional export crops.[65]

74. In all of these regions, there is significant underreporting of women's participation in the agricultural sector. By not counting the unpaid work of women on family farms, official figures have consistently undervalued the contribution of women to agricultural production. Further, cultural attitudes in some regions lead to reluctance among men to acknowledge the economic activities of their wives and daughters outside the house. The full extent of rural women's role in the agricultural sector, in particular, and in the other sectors of the rural economy is not yet fully quantified and recognized. Further work in terms of research and advocacy within the context of efforts to value the unpaid labour of women is required.

V. Conclusions and recommendations

75. The present report has shown that the process of globalization, through the pursuit of trade and financial liberalization policies, has direct and indirect effects on the situation of rural women. Deterioration in the terms of trade of commodities reduces the income due to rural women's labour. It also reduces the trade earnings of developing countries and therefore their capacity to invest in rural infrastructure and in building the human capabilities of rural women.

76. The report has also shown that the changing patterns of financial flows, characterized by a decline in development assistance and increased but uneven equity capital flows to developing countries, are forcing countries to pursue policies such as the privatization of productive assets like land. The accompanying commercialization of agriculture is further intensifying the consolidation of landholding. These policy developments tend to exacerbate the socio-economic marginalization of rural women within the existing framework, because of gender inequality. However, liberalization has had some benefits, particularly in providing opportunities for wage employment for rural

women in new sectors such as the non-traditional export sector in agriculture.

77. The present report has illustrated that women, particularly rural women, are poorer than men, as indicated by their lower levels of literacy, education, health and nutritional status, as well as their lesser entitlement to productive assets and resources.

78. The replies to the note verbale and letter of the Secretary-General show that Governments, specialized agencies and other United Nations entities are responding to the challenges facing rural women in many different ways. Some Governments have developed national poverty plans, while others address poverty within the national planning framework. Most of the Governments report having passed laws and established institutions and policies to secure the access of rural women to productive resources and to the necessary inputs and services. The United Nations entities are engaged in assisting Governments to achieve these legal, institutional and policy objectives.

79. Considering the evolving global policy framework, which includes trade and financial liberalization, privatization and commercialization of agriculture, and taking into account the continuing poverty of rural women in spite of their significant contribution to the agricultural sector, in particular, the General Assembly may call upon Member States, the international community and civil society, including non-governmental organizations, to:

(a) Strengthen their continued efforts at meeting the basic needs of rural women through the provision of a safe and reliable water supply, health and nutritional programmes, and education and literacy programmes. Low levels of education and training, poor nutritional and health status, and limited access to resources depress the quality of life of rural women and hinder economic growth. There is, therefore, a need to invest in the human development of rural women by raising their participation in education and ensuring them appropriate health, nutrition and family planning services;

(b) Ensure the full and equal access of rural women to productive resources and services by making a gender perspective an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes developed in response to the global process of market integration and in pursuit of economic development. Rural women provide the nexus between poverty alleviation and sustainable human development in developing countries, and failure to provide them with equal access to productive resources and services or to include their concerns and experiences, on a basis equal to that of men, in policy frameworks and development strategies, results in inefficient and sub-optimal policy and strategy outcomes and perpetuates inequality between women and men;

(c) Devise new development policies and poverty alleviation strategies that mainstream a gender perspective, incorporate a rights-based approach to development, and seek to minimize or offset the negative impacts of globalization on rural women, while consolidating the benefits arising from that process. This can be effected through the support and encouragement of labour-intensive rural industries and diversification into new avenues such as the non-traditional agricultural export sector which has been credited with employment creation for many rural women;

(d) Implement their policies and programmes, in compliance with their obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and other human rights conventions, with due cognizance of the situation of rural women and the girl child, in order to ensure the full enjoyment of their human rights. Gender inequality within the household, reinforced in society through various socio-economic, cultural, and institutional norms and practices, is responsible for the differential poverty experience and underdevelopment of rural women. Gender inequality and its consequences constitute a violation of the human rights of women;

(e) Pursue the political and socio-economic empowerment of rural women by supporting, by all possible means, their full participation in rural institutions and decision-making at all levels. Access to productive resources and inputs is mediated through social, political and economic institutions such as families and clans, cooperatives, parliaments and banks. Therefore, without the full and equal participation of women in decision-making and in institutions, their interests and concerns may not receive due consideration. This will be detrimental to rural women and will also constrain the outcome of rural development strategies and poverty alleviation efforts;

(f) Revisit the issue of rural women within the context of the review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, with a view to bringing about a renewed focus on work in this area and to establishing the best approaches to reporting on and disseminating developments pertaining to the improvement of the situation of rural women. The Beijing Platform for Action calls for the formulation and implementation of "policies and programmes that enhance the access of women agricultural and fisheries producers (including subsistence farmers and producers, especially in rural areas) to financial,

technical, extension and marketing services; provide access to and control of land, appropriate infrastructure and technology in order to increase women's incomes and promote household food security, especially in rural areas and, where appropriate, encourage the development of producer-owned, market-based cooperatives".[66]

80. Finally, in order to understand the gender implications of the phenomena of globalization and rural change and to determine, quantify, and explain the extent and nature of female poverty, there is need for further comparative research. Such research is necessary because the available data and existing tools of measurement and analysis are insufficient for a full understanding of the gender implications of the processes of globalization and rural change. Future work directed at the improvement of the situation of rural women should be informed by the findings of such research. In this regard, the General Assembly may call for a clear work programme involving research and consultations in order to determine and document:

(a) The changing patterns of rural women's participation in agricultural production and its implications for national food security;

(b) The role of women's labour in the context of household survival strategies developed to cope with increased economic uncertainty caused by market liberalization;

(c) The differential nature of poverty among women and men and its linkage to gender inequality within the household and society.

Notes

[1] The countries that replied were: Cook Islands, Chile, Guatemala, El Salvador, Latvia, Luxembourg, Mexico, Mongolia, Peru, Philippines, Russian Federation, Spain, United Republic of Tanzania, and Ukraine. The specialized agencies and United Nations entities that replied were: Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and the World Bank. The deadline for replies was 1 April 1999, extended to 15 May 1999. The replies from the above-named countries and institutions were received before 15 May.

[2] See *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4–15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13) chap. I, resolution 1, annexes I and II.

[3] The four world conferences on women (1975, 1980, 1985 and 1995), the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (1979), the World Summit for Children (1990), the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (1992), the World Conference on Human Rights and the International Conference on Population and Development (1994), and the World Summit for Social Development (1995). The Summit on the Economic Advancement of Rural Women, organized in 1992 under the auspices of IFAD, also dealt extensively with this issue.

[4] See *Report of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, Nairobi, 15–26 July 1985* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.85.IV.10) chap. I, sect. A.

[5] See General Assembly resolution 34/180, annex, article 14, para. 1.

[6] See A/40/239 and Add.1, A/44/516, A/48/187–E/1993/76, A/50/257/Rev.1–E/1995/61/Rev.1, and A/52/326.

[7] N. Alexandratos, ed. *World Agriculture: Towards 2010. An FAO Study.* (Rome, FAO, 1995, and Chichester, John Wiley, 1995).

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[9] S. Lastarria-Cornhiel, "Impact of privatization on gender and property rights in Africa", *World Development*, vol. 25 (1997).

[10] Y. Ertürk, "Community, conventions and the trends of change" in *Agricultural Sector and Employment in Turkey*, T. Bulutay, ed. (Ankara, Turkish State Institute of Statistics, 1998), No. 2209, pp. 97–122.

[11] Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, *1998 Annual Report of the Chairman of the Development Assistance Committee* (Paris, 1998).

[12] Idriss Jazairy and others, *The State of World Rural Poverty: An Inquiry into its Causes and Consequences* (New York, New York University Press, 1992).

[13] L. A. Thrupp and others, *Bittersweet Harvest for Global Supermarkets* (Washington, D.C., World Resources Institute, 1995).

[14] Ibid.

[15] A. Stephens, "Gender issues in agricultural and rural development policy in Asia and the Pacific", in *Gender Issues in Agricultural Rural Development Policy in Asia and the Pacific* (Rome FAO, 1995).

[16] *Women in a Changing Global Economy: 1994 World Survey on the Role of Women in Development* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.95.IV.1).

[17] Such as those from the Cook Islands, El Salvador, Guatemala, Luxembourg, Mexico, Mongolia, the Philippines, and the United Republic of Tanzania.

[18] ECA, ECLAC, FAO, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the World Bank.

[19] Idriss Jazairy, op. cit.

[20] E. W. Nafziger, *The Economics of Developing Countries* (Englewood, Prentice-Hall, 1997).

[21] Ibid.

[22] Ibid.

[23] FAO, *Rural Women and Food Security: Current Situation and Perspectives* (Rome, 1996).

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[25] M. Z. Zwarteveen, "Water: From need to commodity: a discussion on gender and water rights in the context of privatization", *World Development*, vol. 25 (1997), pp. 1335–1349.

[26] Ibid.

[27] T. P. Tomich and others, *Transforming Agrarian Economies: Opportunities Seized, Opportunities Missed* (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1995).

[28] Ibid.

[29] I. van de Pol, "Claro, hay que pelear el agua: roles de genero en las actividades de riego", Mimeo (Peru, 1992). Quoted in M. Z. Zwarteveen, cited above.

[30] R. S. Meinzen-Dick and others, "Gender and property rights: an overview", *World Development*, vol. 25 (1997), pp. 1299–1302.

[31] World Bank, *Gender Strategies for Sub-Saharan Africa: An Overview* (Washington, D.C., 1998).

[32] Chile, El Salvador, Guatemala, Latvia, Peru, Russian Federation, Spain and Ukraine.

[33] ESCAP, FAO, the World Bank and UNESCO.

[34] Idriss Jazairy, op. cit.

[35] Ibid.

[36] FAO and others, "The potential for improving production tools and implements used by women farmers in Africa" (Rome, 1998).

[37] Ibid.

[38] FAO, *Research and Extension: A Gender Perspective* (Rome, 1996).

[39] Ibid.

[40] FAO, *The Population Parameters of Rural Development* (Rome, 1995).

[41] Mongolia, Mexico and Peru.

[42] Notably IFAD, FAO, the Work Bank, and the ILO.

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[44] Ibid.

[45] Ibid.

[46] Ibid.

[47] E. W. Nafziger, op. cit.

[48] UNDP, *Poverty Report 1998*.

[49] Ibid.

[50] UNDP, *Human Development Report 1997* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1997).

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[54] Ibid.

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[62] FAO, *Rural Women and Food Security: Current Situation and Perspectives* (Rome, 1996), and ESCAP, *Country Profiles: Bangladesh (No. 2), Philippines (No. 3), and Thailand (No. 5)* (New York, 1996).

[63] FAO, *Rural Women*.

[64] Ibid.

[65] Ibid.

[66] See *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women*, Chap. I, resolution 1, annex II, para. 58 (n).